KLAMATH RIVER FISHERY RESTORATION PROGRAM
PLANNING AND COORDINATION
FISCAL YEAR 2000

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Lower Klamath Sub-basin Coordination and Planning

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Lower Klamath River Sub-basin Planning and Coordination

Final Report

Project Number 2000-PC-06

Abstract

The main cause of impaired habitat in Lower Klamath River tributaries is sedimentation resulting from intensive logging and road building on naturally fragile slopes in the 1950's to 1970's, (Balance Hydrologics Inc., 1995). Hillslope improvements and the decommissioning of forest roads have been determined to be the most important methods of restoring native anadromous Coho Salmon, Chinook Salmon, Steelhead Trout, and Pacific Lamprey Eel populations in the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin. A final draft Lower Klamath River Sub-basin Watershed Restoration Plan was developed in 2000 to address the sediment problems in the Lower Basin. This report was funded by the Klamath River Basin Fisheries Task Force and California State Coastal Conservancy in coordination with the Lower Klamath River Partnership, composed of the California State Coastal Conservancy, Simpson Timber Company and the Yurok Tribe. Information collected from four completed watershed assessments has been evaluated by the Partnership in 2000 to fine-tune the prioritization of watershed restoration efforts. Coordination with the Partnership and other cooperating agencies has resulting in over $1 million acquired for watershed restoration improvements in the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin. Sediment reduction watershed restoration focuses on road systems that have a high to moderate erosion potential close to fish bearing streams.

Introduction

The goal of the Yurok Tribe is to restore aquatic habitat conditions within Lower Klamath River tributaries to a level that supports viable, self-sustaining populations of native fish and aquatic resources. Today, only a fraction of historic native fish runs return to spawn in the Klamath River and its tributaries. The low number of native fish and aquatic resources in the Lower Klamath tributaries is directly related to sediment problems. Hillslope improvements and the decommissioning of forest roads have been determined to be the most important methods of restoring aquatic resource populations. The aquatic species of concern in the Lower Klamath sub-basin include Coho Salmon, Chinook Salmon, Steelhead Trout, Coastal Cutthroat Trout, Resident Rainbow Trout, Pacific Lamprey Eel, Pacific Giant Salamander, Yellow Legged Frogs and Tailed Frogs.

In the early 1990's, the California Coastal Conservancy began working with Simpson Timber Company, the Yurok Tribe and other entities to build the foundation for a common effort in fisheries and watershed restoration. The Conservancy funded a study by Balance Hydrologics, Inc. (1995), that led to publication of the *Background Report*

and Strategic Workplan for Watershed Restoration Planning: Lower Klamath River, California, covering all the watershed lands below the confluence with the Trinity River. The report confirmed that the main cause of impaired habitat in the tributaries was sedimentation resulting from intensive logging and road building on naturally fragile slopes in the 1950's to 1970's.

In 1995, the Lower Klamath Restoration Partnership was formed, composed of representatives of the Yurok Tribe, Simpson Timber Company, the California State Coastal Conservancy and the Northern California Indian Development Council to facilitate a coordinated approach to watershed restoration planning. The partnership was formed to perform three goals simultaneously: improve the health of the Klamath River and its tributaries, improve the health of the anadromous fishery, and train unemployed tribal members to become experts in the new and growing field of watershed restoration.

In order to guide this coordinated watershed restoration effort, the Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program prepared a Lower Klamath River Sub-basin Watershed Restoration Plan with Klamath Task Force and California Coastal Conservancy funds. This document prioritizes restoration activities for the sub-basin, as well as prioritizing the tributaries where these activities will be implemented. The final draft plan, completed in April 2000, describes the current watershed condition and watershed restoration actions needed to address the aquatic resource needs, encompassing more than 24 tributaries.

With the assistance of the Klamath Task Force, California State Coastal Conservancy, Simpson Timber Company and other cooperating entities the Yurok Tribe has completed coastal watershed assessments of four priority watersheds, McGarvey Creek, Ah Pah Creek, Tectah Creek and Blue Creek in the Lower Klamath River Basin (Figure 1). Every road in each watershed has been assessed for potential erosion and future sediment delivery. A list of road work has been developed in preparation for a phased approach to watershed restoration and aquatic resource recovery. In addition, four years of watershed restoration funding has been received from a variety of funding sources to begin the road decommissioning identified in the draft plan and watershed assessment documents. This report is a description of the accomplishments in fulfilling the planning and coordination efforts funding by the Klamath Task Force for the year 2000.

Description of Study Area

The Lower Klamath River Sub-basin, includes all lands downstream of the confluence of the Klamath and Trinity Rivers, encompassing a drainage area of approximately 450 square miles. The Yurok Reservation extends one mile on each side of the Klamath River corridor from the Trinity confluence to the mouth at the Pacific Ocean. About 80% of the Lower Klamath watershed is owned by Simpson Timber Company, which manages the land principally for timber production. In the upstream end of the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin from Wautec to Weitchpec the land is subdivided into parcels of land for tribal and non-tribal residents. At the downstream end of the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin from Klamath Glen to the mouth the land is subdivided into parcels of tribal, non-tribal and Park Service ownerships.

Methods and Materials

Periodic meetings have been conducted between the major landowners in the Lower Klamath Sub-basin (LKRP). The Yurok Tribe has begun to work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to identify funding opportunities for small landowners in the upstream and downstream portions of the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin. County survey maps have been obtained to identify where multiple sources of existing State and Federal land improvement funding could be utilized to address watershed restoration problems in the multiple ownership portions of the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin.

A Yurok Tribal representative has attended Klamath River Basin Technical Work Group meetings and provided oral reports on the progress of the Lower Klamath River planning and coordination efforts. Information collected from four watershed assessments have been evaluated to fine-tune the prioritization of watershed restoration efforts. An evaluation of current "best science" restoration techniques applicable to the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin has been conducted.

Results and Discussion

The Yurok Tribe has met with the Lower Klamath River Partnership periodically throughout fiscal year 2000 to coordinate watershed restoration, fisheries enhancement, fisheries monitoring and plan for endangered species recovery. As part of their habitat conservation planning process, Simpson Timber Company conducted a slide show presentation illustrating their long-term approach to fishery recovery throughout their Northern California ownership.

The Yurok Tribe has met with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Forest Service, Redwood National and State Parks, the California State Coastal Commission, California Department of Fish and Game and others to seek funding and coordinate anadromous fishery recovery in the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin. These efforts have resulted in over $1 million dedicated to Lower Klamath resource protection and recovery. In addition, pilot funding has been provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service and matched by the Yurok Tribe to begin sediment reduction projects on small ownerships to reduce impacts to fish.

The Yurok Tribe's representative, Mr. Dan Gale, is the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin Coordinator and the Klamath River Basin Fisheries Task Force Technical Work Group Chair. As such, Dan attends every Klamath River Basin Technical Work Group meeting and provides an oral report on the progress of Lower Klamath River planning and coordination efforts.

Based on a review of the LKRP Matrix it was determined that the integration of new data and assignment of rating values to the different evaluation criteria was not needed at this time. The Matrix can remain the same to focus where watershed assessments need to

take place, while a watershed assessment documents where watershed restoration work needs to occur on the ground. An Operational Plan is being prepared, based on the watershed assessments for each watershed, that will serve the general to specific watershed restoration planning approach that the Lower Klamath Sub-basin Watershed Restoration Plan and Matrix were intended to provide.

A fine-tuning of watershed restoration recommendations has taken place that focuses watershed restoration on road systems that have a high concentration of high to moderate erosion potential close to fish bearing streams. Roads that are built along the edge of fish bearing streams or have a high potential of discharging large quantities of sediment into fish bearing streams are the highest priority for restoration work in the field.

During a re-evaluation of current "best science" restoration techniques applicable to the Lower Klamath Sub-basin it was determined that a better method of laying out road decommissioning work needed to be identified. The Yurok Tribe has been working with Redwood National and State Parks for the last couple of years in watershed restoration on Park lands, and during that dialogue the Tribe determined that the Park Service had developed a more refined method of pre and post decommissioning survey methods. The Yurok Tribe's Watershed Restoration Department now uses a state of the art computer program developed by the Park Service that plots the pre and post condition of roads undergoing decommissioning. These techniques will be implemented during the FY 2001 heavy equipment field season.

Summary and Conclusions

The Yurok Tribe has met the terms of the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin Planning and Coordination program by:

1) Coordinating with the Klamath River Basin Technical Work Group;
2) Plan and coordinate with the Lower Klamath River Partnership;
3) Promote cooperation between land owners and funding agencies in the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin;
4) Help the Lower Klamath River Partnership to review best current science and set priorities for future watershed analysis and restoration efforts (an Operation Plan is in progress); and
5) Coordinate Lower Klamath River Partnership restoration efforts.

Hillslope improvements and the decommissioning of forest roads have been determined to be the most important methods of restoring aquatic resource populations in the Lower Klamath River Sub-basin. The planning and coordination efforts sponsored by the Klamath River Basin Fisheries Task Force have resulted in bringing over $1 million to implement watershed restoration work. The Yurok Tribe's Watershed Restoration Department now uses a state of the art computer program developed by the Park Service that plots the pre and post condition of roads undergoing decommissioning. A fine-tuning of watershed restoration recommendations has taken place that focuses watershed

restoration on road systems that have a high concentration of high to moderate erosion potential close to fish bearing streams.

Summary of Expenditures

Salaries & Benefits	$22,750
Travel & Transportation	3.000
Expendable Equipment & Supplies	1,000
Operating Costs	2,000
Overhead	5,972
Total	$34,722